

## 8th Grade Week 13

### Louisiana Purchase

After the malicious campaigning of the election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson focused on reconciling the colonies and restoring the principles of the Revolution of 1776. “We have called by different names brethren of the same principle,” he declared in his first inaugural address. “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.” The tall and lanky politician was, in many ways, the opposite of his short and rotund predecessor.

Unlike Federalist leaders who supported big business, big cities, and big government, Jefferson believed in an agrarian society with strong local governments. Farming, he believed, was a noble profession because it kept men away from the temptation of the cities and required an honest day’s work. He also favored a more informal style of government than the pomp and ceremony so conspicuous in the Washington and Adams administrations.

While Jefferson formulated his strategy to downsize the federal government and stimulate the country’s economy, Napoleon Bonaparte set in motion his plan to revive French imperialism in the New World. Spain’s agreement to give Louisiana back to France jeopardized Pinckney’s Treaty, which provided Americans free navigation of the Mississippi River. Jefferson feared that the power-hungry Napoleon had designs on controlling the American frontier and would forbid Americans access to New Orleans, the most important shipping port in the south. The prospect of losing rights to the Mississippi River and New Orleans endangered plans for western expansion and threatened the American economy.

In 1802, Jefferson ordered Robert Livingston, minister to France, and later James Monroe to visit Paris to negotiate the purchase of New Orleans and Florida. Jefferson did not know if Spain had also relinquished control of Florida to France, but he realized that the two territories were crucial to America’s success. The president, a pacifist who reduced the size of the American military, aggressively warned that if France took possession of New Orleans, the United States citizens would be forced to rely on the British military to help them win access to the waterway.

However, by 1803, the French army had suffered a humiliating defeat during a slave revolt in Saint Domingue—present day Haiti—and Napoleon’s plans to conquer Europe demanded more men, money, and weaponry than anticipated. These events forced the French ruler to alter plans to expand the French empire into America. Napoleon was no longer concerned with developing sugar plantations in the New World—he needed troops for European battles and money to support his conquest. Napoleon withdrew his soldiers from America and the surrounding islands and ordered Talleyrand to offer all of Louisiana to the Americans.

Livingston and Monroe were authorized to buy New Orleans and Florida for no more than \$10 million, but they never dreamed they would have the opportunity to purchase more than 800,000 square miles. Since Napoleon demanded an immediate response, there was no time to send for Jefferson’s approval. The men negotiated with the French representatives and, in the spring of 1803, the United States government agreed to buy all of the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million.

The purchase more than doubled the size of the United States, but neither party knew the exact size of the territory or what it contained. “I can give you no direction,” said Talleyrand. “You have made a noble bargain for yourselves and, I suppose you will make the most of it.”

The deal garnered support from many Americans who were excited over the prospect of further westward expansion. Critics of the agreement, however, refused to remain silent. Many Federalists attacked Jefferson for undermining the Constitution, which did not mention the purchase of territory. Even Jefferson questioned whether the government had the power under the Constitution to add territory and grant American citizenship to the approximately 50,000 people living in the Louisiana Territory. Jefferson and Congress finally agreed to overlook the constitutional difficulties for the good sense of the country. The president had compromised his belief of a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

Although several prominent Federalists—including John Adams and John Marshall—favored the purchase, others in the party viewed the new land as a threat to their future. Some Federalists feared that an expanded United States would dilute their New England-based political power. They reasoned that the Louisiana inhabitants, including Indians, blacks, and commoners, would be more attracted to the Republican Party values that promoted class equality and extolled the virtues of agrarian life.

### **Lewis & Clark**

The Louisiana Purchase offered the United States much needed room to grow and access to an abundance of natural resources, waterways, and fertile farmland. Countless opportunities awaited the Americans, but they would first have to locate them. The Louisiana Territory was so large that France could not accurately define its contents or borders. Jefferson took advantage of the ambiguous agreement and asserted that it included the Missouri River, western Florida, New Orleans, and all of present-day Texas.

To evaluate the purchase, Jefferson planned an expedition. As a scientist, he wanted to know about the plants, animals, geographical layout, and inhabitants of the region. More importantly, however, the president was hoping to find a water route to connect the Mississippi River with the Pacific Ocean, and he expanded the expedition to investigate regions beyond Louisiana.

In 1803, Jefferson secured \$2,500 from Congress to fund the journey. He then appointed his personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to lead the expedition. To serve as joint commander, Lewis selected William Clark, a veteran army officer with considerable experience as a surveyor, mapmaker, frontiersman, and Indian negotiator. The duo assembled a team of 48 qualified men, called the “Corps of Discovery,” to accompany them on the trip. The members were chosen for their expertise, strength, and character. During the spring of 1804, the group departed from St. Louis and traveled northwest along the Missouri River toward the Pacific Ocean.

Along the way, Lewis and Clark recruited additional help. Among those added were a French trapper named Toussaint Charbonneau and his 16-year-old Shoshone wife Sacajawea who served as guides and interpreters for the journey. Clark believed that having an Indian woman as a

member of their party would show that their intentions were peaceful. Just weeks before the group departed from the upper Missouri, Sacajawea gave birth to her first son. The new Indian mother carried her baby boy on a cradleboard as the group continued its trek.

Four months later, the Corps of Discovery encountered a Shoshone band. When Sacajawea advanced to negotiate the purchase of horses for their leg over the Rocky Mountains, she discovered that it was her brother who led the Shoshone tribe. Sacajawea had been kidnapped at the age of ten and lost touch with her people. Although the reunion with her family was emotional, she remained loyal to the expedition.

Lewis and Clark valued Sacajawea as a guide. Clark wrote in his journal how she remembered Shoshone trails from her childhood and led them along an important trail that passed through a gap in the mountains to the Yellowstone River. The expedition leaders respected Sacajawea for the courage and strength she displayed and formed a strong bond with her son.

In the fall of 1805, the Corps of Discovery crossed the Continental Divide and descended the Snake and Columbia Rivers to the Pacific Ocean. The group marveled at the scenery they believed marked their western destination.

"Great joy in camp we are in View of the Ocian, this great Pacific Octean which we been So long anxious to See. And the roeing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rocky Shores (as I Suppose) may be heard distictly."--William Clark, November 7, 1805.

However, Clark's journal entry was premature: The group was actually at the Columbia estuary. It would be another two weeks before they would reach Cape Disappointment and look out over the Pacific Ocean. The group constructed Fort Clatsop and suffered through a cold, wet winter. In March, they started their trek home and separated into two parties to explore more land. The two groups rejoined each other at the juncture of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers and arrived back in St. Louis in September of 1806.

The Corps of Discovery finally completed the mission that Thomas Jefferson assigned to them nearly three years earlier. The group recorded more than 100 animals and nearly 200 plants new to American science. They traveled thousands of miles over various terrains and created approximately 150 maps. The expedition established friendly relations with Indians and identified strategic locations for trading posts. However, the group did not find the item Jefferson most wanted—a water passage connecting the Mississippi River with the Pacific Ocean.

Between 1806 and 1807, Jefferson continued to gather information about the territory west of the Mississippi River. He sent Lieutenant Zebulon Pike to find the source of the Mississippi and to explore the Colorado region. Although he did not keep detailed notes like Lewis and Clark, Pike's excursion offered Americans valuable information regarding the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains.

## **Marbury v Madison**

John Marshall was a lifelong Federalist dedicated to strengthening the power of the Federal government. He was appointed by John Adams during the last days of his presidency. The Judiciary Act of 1801, one of the final laws passed by Adams and the Federalist-controlled Congress, created sixteen new federal judgeships and other judicial offices. The appointment of these “midnight judges” enraged Republicans who claimed the action defied the will of the people who had voted the Federalists out of office.

The Republican-dominated Congress fought back by repealing the Judiciary Act of 1801. When Secretary of State James Madison refused to deliver a commission to William Marbury, one of Adams’s midnight appointees, Marbury sued for its delivery. The future of the Federalist Party in Washington seemed bleak. However, the case of *Marbury v. Madison* went to the Supreme Court, which was led by John Marshall, the Federalists’ most powerful member and Jefferson’s distant cousin.

The Court’s unanimous opinion, which was written by Chief Justice Marshall, stated that Marbury deserved his commission, but the Court had no jurisdiction in the case. Marshall then ruled that part of the Judiciary Act of 1789, which dealt with the authority of the Supreme Court, was unconstitutional. With his decision, Marshall answered the controversial question regarding who had the authority to determine the meaning of the Constitution. Marshall created the precedent of judicial review, empowering the Supreme Court to rule a federal law unconstitutional and impose its will on the states.

Marshall’s decision prompted Jefferson to strike back. The president, who let many of Adams’s midnight appointments stand, sought the impeachment of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase. Republicans were appalled by Chase’s vindictive partisanship and wanted nothing more than to relieve him of his authority. In 1804, the House of Representatives indicted Chase on “high crimes and misdemeanors.” The impeachment proceedings then moved to the Senate to determine guilt or innocence. The Senate failed to generate enough votes to convict and remove Chase from his post. In the end, it was found that Chase’s only crime was his inability to control his temper and his big mouth, and neither was a violation of law.

## **Jefferson’s Embargo**

Thomas Jefferson envisioned a peaceful, agrarian society that used diplomacy, rather than military might, to execute America’s foreign policy. Jefferson believed that a large standing army was an invitation to dictatorship, and he drastically reduced the size of both the American Army and Navy. However, events in the Mediterranean quickly challenged Jefferson’s decision and forced him to re-evaluate his philosophy about the use of force.

On the Barbary Coast of North Africa, rulers of Algiers, Morocco, Tunis, and Tripoli extorted money from countries wishing to send cargo ships through their waters. For years, American shipping was safe because Britain regularly paid the pirates. However, after the Revolution, American vessels were no longer protected by British payments of tribute, and the leaders of the

new American government agreed to take over payment of the protection money. Ironically, it was during this same time that the French demanded a bribe from America to meet with Foreign Minister Talleyrand. Colonists, angry at the attempted extortion, cried “millions for defense but not one cent for tribute.”

In 1801, the pasha of Tripoli increased the tribute demanded for safe passage. When Jefferson refused to pay, Tripoli declared war on the United States, and the president reluctantly sent warships to Tripoli. The American frigate *Philadelphia* was eventually captured and its men held hostage. After four years of sporadic fighting, Jefferson finally negotiated a treaty with Tripoli. For \$60,000, the captured Americans were released. To make sure that the weapons on the *Philadelphia* could not be used against Americans, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur slipped on board the ship and set it ablaze.

Jefferson reassessed his decision to scale back the military and ordered several small gunboats that critics nicknamed “Jefferies” or the “mosquito fleet.” The undersized boats were fast but featured just one gun. Jefferson believed that the boats could effectively guard the American coastline but were not intimidating enough to lure the country into international incidents on the high seas.

In 1803, American shipping became entangled in European hostilities when Napoleon revived his war with England. The American Navy, which was no match for the heavily armed English and French, could offer only limited protection for American merchants. While both England and France captured American ships, it was the English who forced the detained American sailors to fight for the Royal Navy. For the next several years, England impressed more than one thousand Americans each year. The actions of the British angered United States citizens, and calls for retaliation intensified.

In the summer of 1807 off the coast of Virginia, the crew of the British frigate *Leopard* stopped the American ship *Chesapeake* and demanded to search it. When the captain refused to obey the orders, the British warship opened fire, killing three Americans and injuring several more. When Jefferson learned of the incident, he ordered all British ships to leave U.S. territorial waters. The British, however, responded with even more aggressive searches.

Jefferson set in motion his idea of “peaceable coercion” by encouraging Congress to pass the Embargo Act of 1807, which stopped all exports of American goods. Jefferson reasoned that both England and France relied heavily on American products and would be forced to work with the United States. Lax enforcement of the act along with alternate sources of products provided by Latin America ruined Jefferson’s plan. The embargo actually did more harm than good because American farmers and manufacturers had no outlets to sell their goods.

Jefferson’s popularity plunged and the Federalist Party began to make a resurgence as voters eyed the upcoming election. Critics shouted that Jefferson’s decisions damaged the economy and left America unprotected. The president finally conceded defeat and repealed the embargo during his last days in office. Congress then passed the Non-Intercourse Act, which reopened trade with all countries except France and England.